

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONTRE 00048 072317Z
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TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJ: SOMBER REFLECTIONS ABOUT QUEBEC AND CANADA

1. CONVERSATIONS WITH THE CONSUL GENERAL CONTINUE TO HOME IN ON LOCAL CONDITIONS, PARTICULARLY ECONOMIC, WITH AN INCREASING NUMBER OF ANGLOPHONES EXPRESSING THE HOPE THAT "NEW YORK WILL NOT (REPEAT NOT) BAIL OUT" LEVESQUE'S GOVERNMENT. GORDON LENNARD, SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT OF CANADIAN IMPERIAL BANK OF COMMERCE, ALSO RECENTLY EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN PRIVATELY ABOUT COMMENT HE HAD HEARD THAT "IF US SUPPORTS LEVESQUE, IT WILL BE A MARK THAT IT LOOKS TOWARD QUEBEC SEPARATION AND THEN THE REST OF CANADA BECOMING PART OF THE U.S." HE "HOPED" THAT THIS TYPE OF COMMENT WOULD NOT REACH THE PRESS. LENNARD IS NOT, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, ONE OF THE "DON'T HELP" ADHERENTS AND IS A GOOD FRIEND OF THE U.S.

2. PROMINENT BUSINESS PEOPLE STILL VISIT CONSUL GENERAL (RATHER THAN VISA SECTION WHERE THEY MIGHT BE NOTICED) TO LEARN ABOUT IMMIGRATION PROSPECTS. MOST RECENT WAS LEONARD ELLEN, WHOSE FAMILY HAS BEEN IN LUMBER INDUSTRY HERE SINCE 1871 AND WHO HAS ALSO BEEN A LEADER IN SECURITIES INDUSTRY FOR PAST TEN YEARS.

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PAGE 02 MONTRE 00048 072317Z

HIS POSITION WAS THAT "U.S. IS LAST BASTION OF DEMOCRACY. I CAN NO LONGER STAND WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THIS COUNTRY -- AND I DO NOT MEAN JUST QUEBEC. I DON'T LIKE OR TRUST OUR LEADER, OR ANY KNOWN ALTERNATIVE."

3. TYPICAL PHONE CALL THIS MORNING WAS FROM FRENCH-CANADIAN FRIEND WANTING TO KNOW NEAREST BRANCH BANK OF FIRST NATIONAL

CITY BANK IN ORDER TO TRANSFER "NOT A LOT OF MONEY BUT ABOUT \$40 THOUSAND." WHEN IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT HER BANK WOULD BE BETTER ABLE TO ADVISE HER THAN I, THE RESPONSE WAS "THE BANKS DON'T WANT TO HELP US BECAUSE THEY DO NOT WANT THE MONEY MOVED TO THE U.S." (THIS MAY HAVE BEEN BASED ON ASSUMPTION RATHER THAN EXPERIENCE, BUT IT IS A NOT UNCOMMON VIEW.)

4. COMMENT: IT HAD BEEN EXPECTED, AND IT HAS BEEN WIDELY REFLECTED IN THE PRESS, THAT THE INITIAL PANICKY REACTION TO THE NOVEMBER 15 ELECTION OF A PQ GOVERNMENT WOULD BE AND HAD BEEN SUCCEEDED BY A CALMER, "LET'S WAIT AND SEE ATTITUDE. THIS IS PARTIALLY TRUE -- BUT ONLY PARTIALLY. AS REPORTED MONTREAL'S 1893, DEC. 8, 1976, THE INITIAL SURGE IN IMMIGRANT VISA ENQUIRIES DID SUBSIDE, BUT TO A MUCH HIGHER PLATEAU THAN NORMAL -- I.E., TELEPHONE CALLS RESULTING IN REQUESTS FOR PRELIMINARY APPLICATION FORMS ARE STILL UP FROM A PRIOR AVERAGE OF ABOUT A THOUSAND A MONTH TO SLIGHTLY MORE THAN TWO THOUSAND A MONTH, BUT ARE DOWN FROM THE SPURT DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS OF NOVEMBER. MORE WORRISOME, IN TERMS OF CANADA'S LONG-TERM INTERESTS AND PROSPECTS -- AND COLLATERALLY THEREFORE OF OURS -- IS THE CALIBER (ALTHOUGH SMALLER NUMBER) OF PERSONS BRINGING TO THE PERSONAL ATTENTION OF THE CG A SERIOUS INTENT TO DEPART NOT JUST QUEBEC BUT CANADA. THERE HAS LONG BEEN AN INTEREST, OF COURSE, ON THE PART OF PERSONS JUST RETIRED (OR ABOUT TO) TO SEEK A WARMER CLIME. THOSE WHO ARE COMING NOW ARE VIGOROUS, SUCCESSFUL, UNDER-55-YEAR-OLDS (SOME QUITE A BIT "UNDER") WHO INTEND TO START NEW CAREERS IN THE U.S.

5. IT IS COMMON GOSSIP AMONG ANGLOPHONES THAT AMONG THE MOST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MONTRE 00048 072317Z

WORRIED PEOPLE HERE ARE THE "ESTABLISHED" FRANCOPHONES WHO, IT IS SAID, REALLY DO NOT HAVE THE SAME FLEXIBILITY WITH REGARD TO THE REST OF CANADA AS A NEW HOME AS DO THE ANGLOPHONES. THIS IS PROBABLY TRUE, AND TO SOME EXTENT HAS BEEN REFLECTED IN JOSHING CONVERSATIONS OF FRANCOPHONES ABOUT "ALWAYS BEING ABLE TO MOVE TO FLORIDA." TO DATE, HOWEVER, THEY HAVE NOT BEEN SHOWING UP IN OUR OFFICES FOR CONCRETE ADVISE ON IMMIGRATION PROSPECTS (OTHER THAN AN RCMP SERGEANT IN YESTERDAY FOR THIS PURPOSE) -- AND MAY NEVER DO SO. FRANCOPHONE FRIENDS SAY THAT IF THEY FEEL PUSHED INTO LEAVING QUEBEC IT WILL PROBABLY BE TO ONTARIO, "THE ONLY OTHER PART OF CANADA WHERE WE ARE UNDERSTOOD." THEY ARE, IT WOULD SEEM, BETTER CANADIANS THAN OUR RECENT VISITORS.
HARPER

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